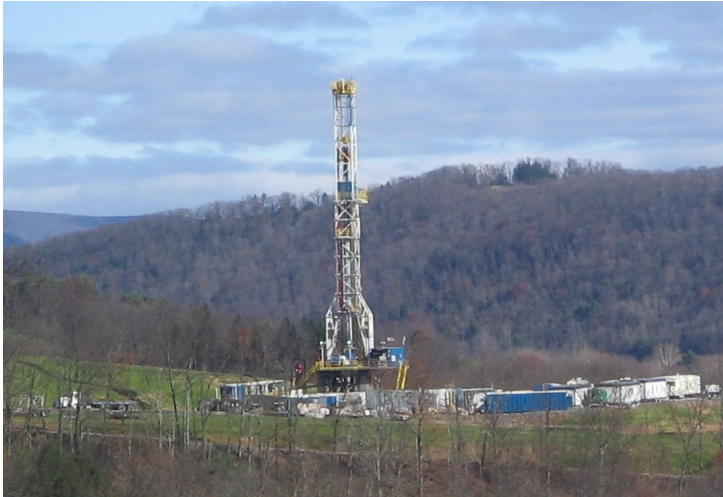


Here in Upstate New York we live above a section of the Marcellus Shale Deposit-a rock formation extending deep underground from Ohio and West Virginia northeast into Pennsylvania and southern New York. This is of particular importance because geologists estimate that the entire shale formation contains between 168 trillion to 516 trillion cubic feet of natural gas-and as much as 1.1 trillion cubic feet of natural gas in New York State alone.



As I have said from the very beginning, I am not opposed to development in the Marcellus Shale Deposit here in Upstate New York. Natural Gas is a tremendous resource with the potential for significant economic benefits. However, we must ensure that a rush to drill and reap those benefits does not come at the expense of our greatest natural resource-our abundant supply of clean water.

Back in January, I called for the NYS DEC to withdraw its draft Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement (dSGEIS) because I believe it does not go far enough to protect our water here in Upstate New York. I expressed outrage at DEC Commissioner Grannis's decision to exempt the New York City and Skaneateles Lake watersheds from potential hydrofracking for what appeared to be no better reason than to protect more densely populated areas from the risks of contamination. I find it incredibly hard to believe that hydrofracking isn't safe enough for those closer to Syracuse and New York City but is safe enough for residents of Cooperstown or Oneonta or the thousands of other Upstate New York residents in more rural areas that rely completely on well water. [Read More](#)

More recently, I attended the EPA's Public Meeting on their proposed Hydraulic Fracturing Study held in Binghamton, NY. As we move forward and continue to discuss the development of the Marcellus Shale Deposit, it is important to separate the fact from fiction and ensure that the citizens that would be affected, the opportunity to participate in the discussion. [Watch Video](#)

### **Applying Lessons Learned**

Currently, oil and gas companies enjoy exemptions from nearly every major piece of environmental protection law on the books. If the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico has taught us anything, it is that accidents can happen-no matter how unlikely we are told they are-and when they do, they have the potential to be devastating. I have fought to ensure that the lessons learned from that disaster are applicable to onshore as well as offshore drilling. [Read More](#)

### **Protecting Against Runoff Contamination**

Hydraulic fracturing of the Marcellus Shale will likely involve the construction of hundreds, if not thousands of drilling pads. Since much of the subject area in NYS is either forest or farm land, it should be expected that constructing these drill pads will also require the construction of a significant amount of access roads as well. All of this construction activity will entail significant disturbance to the top soil, creating the potential for erosion and stormwater runoff into the area's rivers and streams.

Additionally, much of the Chesapeake Bay watershed overlies the Marcellus Shale. With the EPA just issuing limits on the amount of sediment each state in the watershed can contribute from all sources, the potential for increased runoff is of concern. [Read More](#)

In the House passed CLEAR Act, I included language that would help protect surface water from drilling site runoff contamination by removing the special exemption that the oil and natural gas industries enjoy from the EPA's stormwater permit requirements under the Clean Water Act for the construction of drilling sites. [Read More](#)

### Safety of Hydraulic Fracturing

Much of the discussion has centered on [horizontal drilling](#) and the hydraulic fracturing process commonly known as "Hydro-Fracking." Currently, hydraulic fracturing is exempted from the Safe Drinking Water Act. We need to ensure proper techniques are used to prevent spills of fluids and gas leaking out of wells into drinking water-both now and long-term, when the original company has sold or abandoned the well. Also, in the event of a spill it is also vital that we know what chemicals are being used - and have been used in the past; something gas companies have been protected from sharing as a "trade secret." To address these issues, I have cosponsored the FRAC Act, which removes the Safe Drinking Water Act exemptions granted to the oil and gas industries.

These efforts do not over regulate or add burdens that would prevent natural gas development from being profitable. Rather, they force natural gas companies to play by the same environmental rules as every other industry. And, aim to ensure that they put the same effort into protecting the health and wellbeing of the environment and our communities as they do into making profits.

New York's natural gas reserves are not declining in value as they wait to be developed. And while I support the future development of the Marcellus Shale Deposit, which holds the promise of new jobs and economic opportunities for Upstate families, we must insure we move forward in a way that protects our water. Something I am confident we can do. After all, energy is very important to our future, but clean water is absolutely critical.